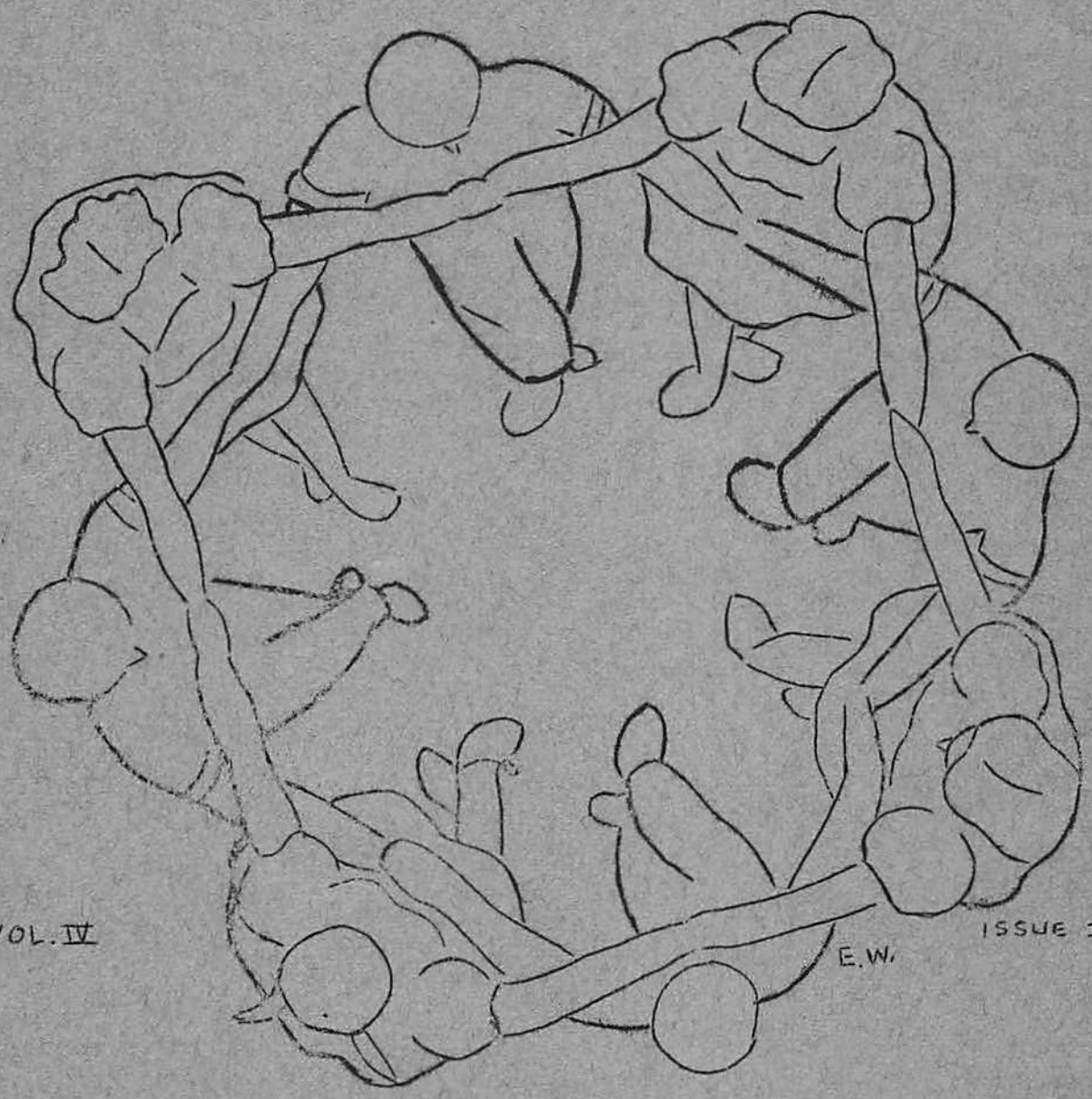
PRIMITIVE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE



VOL. IV

ISSUE I

AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

MARGOT MAYO

LEADER

PROMENADE

Official Organ of the American Square Dance Group

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana, which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, color, creed, social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views."

- A.S.D.G. Constitution

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AU REVOIR

These goodbyes -for a time- are getting me down. Each member of the ASDG is so important that it is difficult to find words which express our feelings when separation draws near. I had hoped I could get out of writing this particular farewell which I have been dreading so long.... Alan Swartz was in town for a few hours and I asked him, as an old-timer in both the group and the army, to write it for me:

M.M.

Dear Stuart,

Everybody's been saying goodbye to you now that you're leaving for the army. Well, from where I stand, a lot more and myself are saying "Hello, glad to have you with us!"

You're joining another kind of group now. We guarantee your own private room and bath which you'll share with 300 others. The food is pretty good and moreover, there's plenty of it. Your new costume is swell for marching; now you'll have rehearsals every day. Plenty of time to play your banjo and plenty of audience to go with it.

Ya know, you're gonna meet an awful lot of fellows like yourself, eyeing one another the first day, attempting interesting conversation and trying hard to make the necessary adjustments. But it's gonna be a little easier for you to do so; it was for me. It seems that being in a square set with three other couples you never saw before is very much the same thing. You find yourself tolerantly laughing over one another's mistakes and following the calls so as not to spoil the fun for the others. And sometimes you'll get lonely for home too.

I'd like to make a prediction. I'm betting you'll think of the ASDG in a much different light. You'll say to yourself, "Gosh, I wonder how much more difficult it would have been if I hadn't known the ASDG." Quote me five months from today. Oh, yes, the Army has some wonderful institutions. There's one in particular which follows guard duty, kitchen police and garbage detail....that's the traditional "gripe." Get in your share of griping - it'll do you good. And after the gripe session with some twenty other soldiers is over, I think you'll get the impression "We've really got something here! We can gripe and gripe to our hearts' content."

(next page please)

About square dancing. You'll find fellows in your outfit from so many different parts of the country, you won't have to look too hard to find someone who shares your opinion. Believe me, army life is a wonderful experience. A fellow learns an awful lot in a very short time.

Well, Stu, the ASDC will miss you and your harmonica and your banjo. But for every guy like you who spent just a little time with us and came to mean so much, a little something was added.....something we don't measure in quarts, inches, or pounds. It's like that feeling one gets when a friend shakes your hand, looks you in the eye, and says, "Gee, it's great having you with us." Know what I mean?

See you again fella.....drop us a line.

Alan

SAMSONVILLE QUADRILLE
(collected by Margot Mayo in upper New York State)

FORMATION: quadrille
MUSIC: "T'ain't Nothing"
INTRODUCTION: Honor partners, corners, circle left

FIGURE 1

a) Head lady to the right, gent to the left, circle three hands round
b) Meet and circle four hands
c) Lady to her left and gent to his right and circle three hands round
d) Head couple swing
e) Allemande left, grand right and left, Promenade

FIGURE 11

a) Head couples right and left on the right
b) Top two, two ladies chain
c) Half promenade home
d) Allemande left. grand right and left, Promenade home

FIGURE 111

a) Head couple out to the right and circle four
b) On to the next and two ladies chain
c) On to the next and circle four
d) Right and left six in line
e) Allemande left, grand right and left, Promenade

DESCRIPTION OF SA MSONVILLE QUADRILLE

FIGURE 1

a) The head lady of the first couple goes out to the couple on her right and circles three hands round while her partner does the same with the couple on his left.

b) They meet in the center and circle four hands with the third couple.

c) They separate again, this time the lady going to her left and the gent to his right and they circle three.

d) They meet in the center of the set and swing to place.

e) Gents turn to the lady on their left and give her their left hands, turn once around and give your partner your right hand, the next lady in line your left hand and so on til you meet your partner and promenade to place.

FIGURE 11

a) The two head couples face the couple on their right and advance towards each other, the gents moving on the outside of the ladies, who pass left shoulders. They turn around and repeat this, back to place.

b) The ladies of the same two couples give right hands and dropping them give left hands to the opposite gent who turns them around and they repeat the same thing, back to place with their original partners.

c) The same two couples do a half right and left across, just half of (a) and taking your partner in a promenade position walk to place.

d) Same as (e) of Figure 1

FIGURE 111

a) The head couple goes out to the couple on the right and circles four

b) On to the next and two ladies chain. Same as (b) of Figure 11

c) On to the next and four hands around

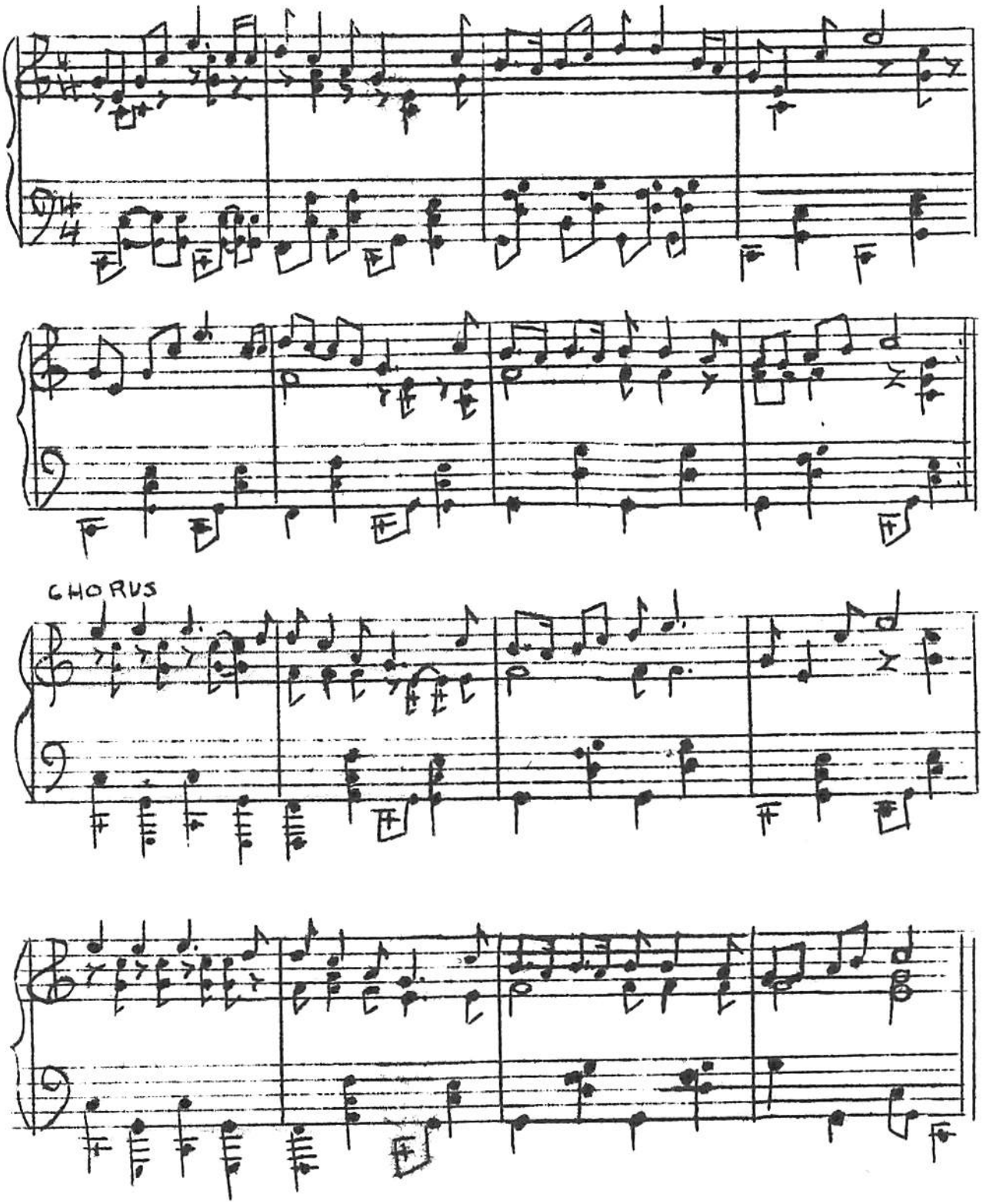
d) This figure is almost the same as figure (a) of figure 1, except, instead of turning around to go back after one couple you pass through two couples and then turn around and go the other way back to place.

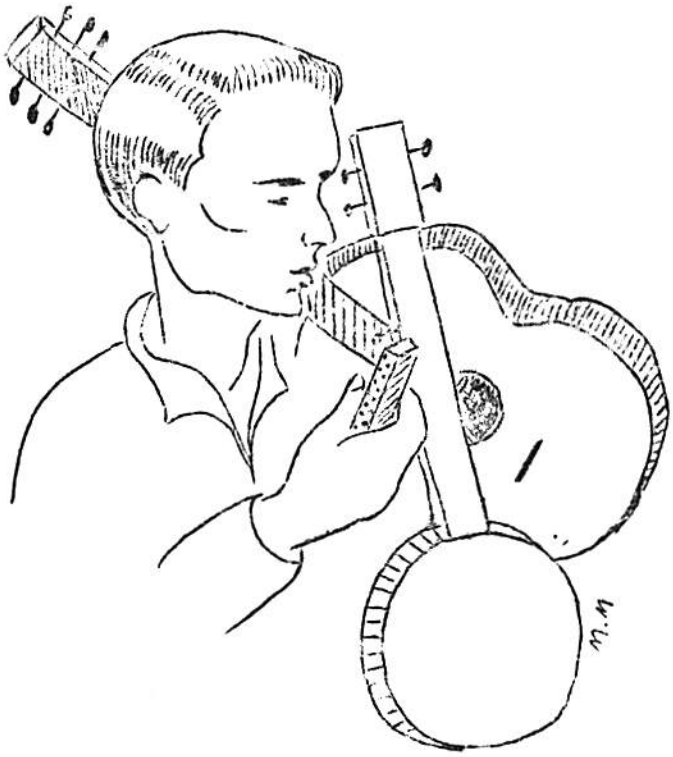
e) Same as Figure 1 (e)

note.....after you finish Figure 11 the head couples face the couple on their left and repeat the whole of that figure with them.

"T'AINT NOTHING"

(The caller's own music, but since it had no name, we have given it this tit





HEY, STUY

There are, after all, so many things to say about Stuy, he means so much to the ASDG and to me, that I find myself writing a farewell note in spite of myself!

Stuy is such a very special sort of person and it's hard to imagine what rehearsals, demonstrations and open houses will be like without Stuy. In the too-short time he has been with us, Stuy has become very much a part of our group, and represents that quality which makes our group so important to us.

Some folks can contribute so much in enthusiasm, work and joy....and Stu has certainly done more than his share in the group. Some of our most beloved square dance tunes have come into our repertoire by way of Stuart and his brother Don. Who of us can hear "Cotton-eyed Joe," "The Wagoner" and other favorites without thinking of Stuy? And some of the best dances published in Promenade were collected by the Jamieson boys. Not to mention the afternoons they spent running off Promenade!

We'll certainly miss Stuart with his wealth of knowledge and his eagerness to know all about everything. Just mention any one of a number of widely divergent subjects..nature, history, navigation, folk lore, Scotland..anything at all, and you will find that somewhere, sometime, Stuy has delved into it. Or, which is more important , if he hasn't he will! How many times we have said, "Well, ask Stuy". Incidentally, "Stuy" is pronounced "Stewie."

There are certain tunes and songs that always remind us of certain members of the group...we will never hear "Mattie Groves" without thinking of Arthur Lentz..."Craw-Dad Song" without thinking of Teffie..."Old Joe Clark" without thinking of Pete Seeger...and for myself, I shall never hear the "Blue Bells of Scotland" without thinking of Stuart Jamieson. You remember

Oh where, tell me where, has my Highland laddie gone?
Oh where, tell me where, has my Highland laddie gone?
He's gone with streaming banners where noble deeds are done,
And it's oh, in my heart, that I wish him safe at home.

So, Stuy...my thanks...my love...good luck...and make it snappy...come back soon. The American Square Dance Group will be waiting to dance again to your music...and to be again with you.

Margot

BOOK REVIEW

SONGS OF AMERICAN FOLKS by Coleman and Bregman. (John Day co.; 128pp; 1942; $2.25)

A valuable contribution has been made to the field of American folk-lore in this newly-published book "Songs of American Folks" edited by Satis Coleman and Adolph Bregman. It is by no means all-embracing in its contents, as the editors themselves point out It is rather a sampling of various representative elements of our American folk heritage.

The first section, "When the Land was Young," contains songs from England and Scotland which indeed have taken root and have become very much ours. That is followed by "Up and Down the Country" with songs chosen from different sections. And happily, it may be added, "Kansas Boys" is included among them in the same version as recorded so well by Tony Kraber.

Then comes "Ridin' High, Wide An' Handsome" the songs of the "most engaging, individual, hard-working, hard-playing, hard-living, hard-dying" cowboy. "Hill Folks" has such favorites taken from the southern mountain folk as "Cindy" and "Ground Hog."

In no way could a section on the "Colored Folks" be omitted. For "in their songs there is no need to search for origin; they are songs of America!" "Negro Spirituals and Bible Songs" is a separate section in this book; it contains some of the lesser-known but equally as beautiful spirituals as well as those songs translated from the Bible by the Negro people.

For a change in mood, the "Hoedown" comes next. These are the liveliest and gayest tunes "where the sounds of voices and 'stomping' are inseparable."

"The Other Side of the Law" contains songs from behind prison walls. Some examples are "The Penitentiary Blues", "The Midnight Special," and "Billy the Kid." The ability of the American people to laugh is exemplified in "A Little Nonsense-Now and Then" with such songs as "The Crazy Dixie" and "Kafoozelum."

"Songs of American Folks" aside from being a fine collection of songs, has the music in simple yet pleasant arrangements. One must not overlook the charming illustrations done by Alanson Hewes.

NOTES OF INTEREST

CORRECTION: Because of an unfortunate typrographical error in last month's Notes of Interest, the statement was made that Margot is wearing "ten air corps pins." We should like to dispel the remarkable picture summoned up by this statement by assuring our readers that as a matter of fact she is wearing only one such pin.

The Group's Holiday party was held on Tuesday, December 29 with a full turn-out of members and their friends and parents. Two old friends of the Group, Leadbelly and Adolph Bregman were also present to join in the fun and help in the entertainment. Leadbelly did several of his best known songs in his distinctive style but also included some less familiar Christmas songs of his childhood. Mr. Bregman, whose book " Songs of American Folks" is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, sang some of the best songs of this collection, such as "The Cowboy's Christmas Ball" and the highly humorous "Glory Trail". Incidently, Mr. Bregman's daughter was one of the first members of the Junior Group of the American Square Dance Group.

The proceedings were considerably enlivened by the presence og Group members who had been away at college or work during the fall and who returned for Christmas; Naomi Baker, Pat Diska, Maizie Gusakoff, Gene Levitt, Byron Menendez, Joe Faben and Alan Swartz.

Our regular appearances at the Stage Door Canteen every Sunday night continue with undiminished popularity. On December 30 we had a demonstration at the Hotel Roosevelt for the Daughters of the American Revolution and the next day, New Year's Eve, we helped merry-makers at the Waldorf-Astoria celebrate the coming of the New Year.